

LECTURE

Lost & Found:

Plymouth Colony's Frontier Settlement at Barrington's
Nockum Hill 1667–1675



June 15, 2026 7 pm

COUNCIL CHAMBERS, BARRINGTON TOWN HALL

One hundred years before the American Revolution, the first battle of King Philip's War, a war described by historian Jill Lepore as forming the "origins of American Identity," took place at Nockum Hill.

From the moment the English arrived in Plymouth in 1620, a thirst for land, coupled with a quest for religious freedom, drove them to expand westward. By 1667, this westward expansion led to the establishment of a new town centered around John Myles' Baptist Meeting house at what is now an isolated corner of Barrington, Rhode Island, known as Nockum Hill.

This lecture will explore what recent archaeological studies and historical document research reveal about the people who settled the town and the events that led to its early demise at the onset of King Philip's War in June of 1675.

Co-sponsored by BPS, the Town of Barrington, Barrington Public Library, Barrington250, and KPW350



Monument to Myles' Church at Nockum Hill

Erected by Rhode Island Historical Society, 1906





Barrington Preservation Society

DISCOVER • PRESERVE • RESTORE

Fall 2019

Trustees

Nathaniel Taylor, President
David Stonestreet, Vice President
Duncan Sutherland, Secretary
Jason Lawrence, Treasurer

Maria Bruce
Jean Douglas
Van Edwards
Barbara Hail
Stephen Venuti
Sara Kriz, Graphic Design

Barrington Preservation Society Museum

Lower Level,
Public Library

Hours

Wednesdays & Saturdays
1:00 - 4:00 or
by appointment

Phone

(401) 289-0802

E-mail

info@barringtonpreservation.org

LOT 3A! Historic Kernel of Barrington Purchased by the Town: Thank you!

"Lot 3A" on Nockum Hill is the bucolic, six-acre historic kernel of colonial Barrington. The historic Baptist meeting house that almost certainly graced the site in the 1660s long ago gave way to horse paddock, wildflowers, and terrapin nests.

After six years of meetings, hearings, and litigation over Lot 3A, the Town of Barrington gave way to horse paddock, wildflowers, and terrapin nests. The historic Baptist meeting house that almost certainly graced the site in the 1660s long ago gave way to horse paddock, wildflowers, and terrapin nests.

Freedom from the threat of development gives us new opportunities to study the window into Barrington's past. Preservation Society volunteers are working to plan a non-invasive archeological survey, which should settle the mystery of the meeting house location and may turn up traces of other colonial and pre-colonial structures.

Elizabeth Sargent Warren Award: Nominate Now

The Barrington Preservation Society is asking for nominations for the Elizabeth Sargent Warren Historic Preservation Award. This award was established in 2012 and named for longtime architectural historian and preservationist Elizabeth (Bonnie) Sargent Warren.

The purpose is to honor an individual, business, family, or organization for exceptional record of service or advocacy for preservation work in maintaining or preserving the historic character of Barrington.

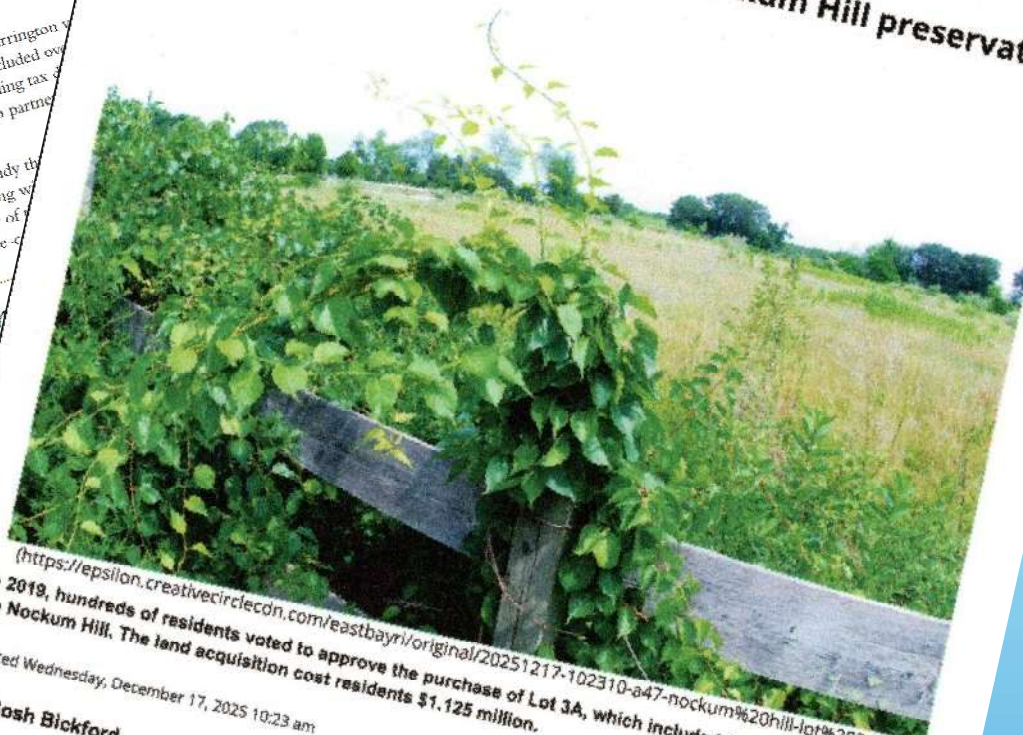
- Any resident of Barrington may make a nomination by submitting the following information:
- name and address of the nominee
 - name and address of the person making the nomination
 - statement of impact of the project or nomination
 - (if relevant) photographs of the project or nomination

Suggestions for potential future nominations

Please send any nominations (or suggestions) to the Barrington Preservation Society by mail to: Barrington Preservation Society, c/o Barrington Town Museum, 100 Main Street, Barrington, RI 02806. You may also contact Nat Taylor, BPS President, at nat@barringtonpreservation.org.

History of Nockum Hill was nearly lost to condominium development

A vote by residents paves way for Nockum Hill preservation effort



(<https://epsilon.creativecirclecdn.com/eastbayn/original/20251217-102310-a47-nockum%20hill-lot%203a.jpg>)
In 2019, hundreds of residents voted to approve the purchase of Lot 3A, which included 6.8 acres of open space on Nockum Hill. The land acquisition cost residents \$1.125 million.

Posted Wednesday, December 17, 2025 10:23 am

By Josh Bickford

For many years, Lot 3A on George Street in Barrington was used for horseback riding, but about a few years ago, a developer purchased the land. The Warwick-based builder drew up plans for a large scale condominium complex on Lot 3A.

Environmentalists, preservationists and others opposed the planned development, and some questioned the impact it would have on endangered diamondback terrapins which nest in that area. In 2019, hundreds of residents voted to approve the purchase of Lot 3A, which included 6.8 acres of open space on Nockum Hill. The land acquisition cost residents \$1.125 million.

"Shortly after the town bought the property, there was a meeting at the town hall where a bunch of people from the preservation society and the land trust met with Jim Cunha, who was the town manager at the time," said Stephen Venuti, who has been part of the team studying the property. "We convinced the town that since you own the property, we can find the meeting house."

Public Archaeology Survey Team, Inc.



Ross Harper, Ph.D., RPA
Senior Historical Archaeologist
rharper@ahs-inc.com



Mary Guillette Harper, M.A., RPA
President
mharper@ahs-inc.com

Metal Detecting



Ground Penetrating Radar



Soil Excavation



Artifact Recovery



Expert Metal Detectorist George Pecia



Project Consultant Kevin McBride



Q. What is it?
A. *"It ain't nothing."*



Image 5: Two fragments of 17th-century seal top spoons recovered from Lot 3A.



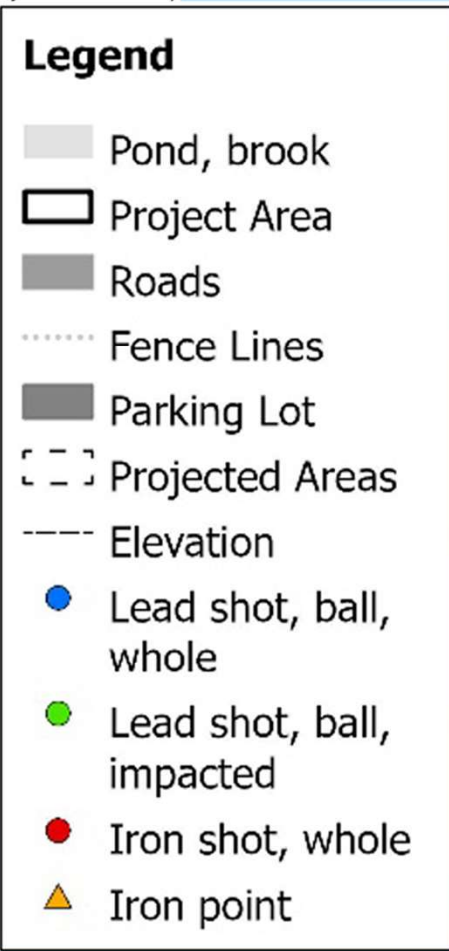
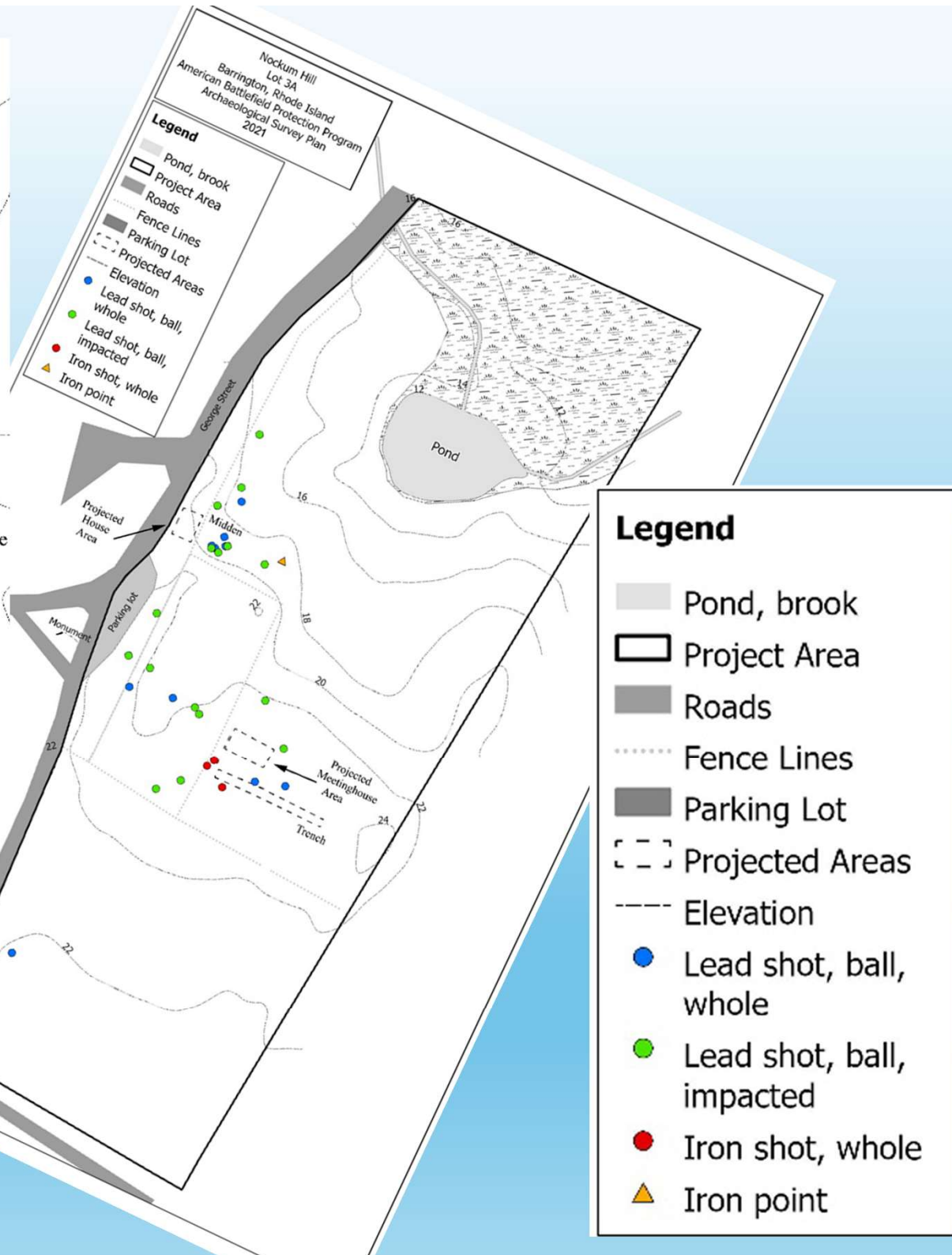
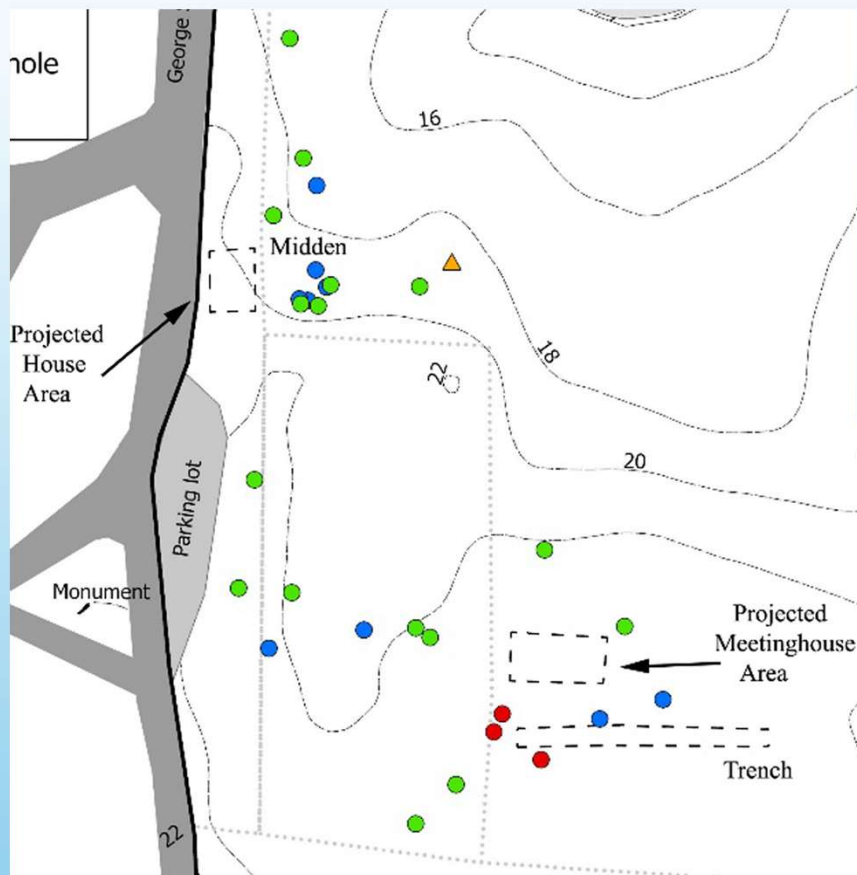
Image 6: A large lead seal with an apparent British Broadarrow etched into it, perhaps used as a boundary marker.



Photograph 5: Four fragments of cut scrap sheet brass or copper. Reworking or recycling sheet brass and copper was a common activity of early colonial sites and an important archaeological marker or signature of the period.



Image 7: Examples of whole and impacted lead ball and shot recovered from Lot 3A in 2020 associated the Battle of Nockum Hill June 24, 1675.





National Park Service



Preservation Planning Grants >

Grants for 50+ eligible project activities focused on sites of armed conflict on American soil, including battlefields and associated sites.

American Battlefield Protection Program

In 1653, two men and two seemingly unrelated events, an ocean apart, would later play defining roles in the creation of the frontier settlement at Nockum Hill.

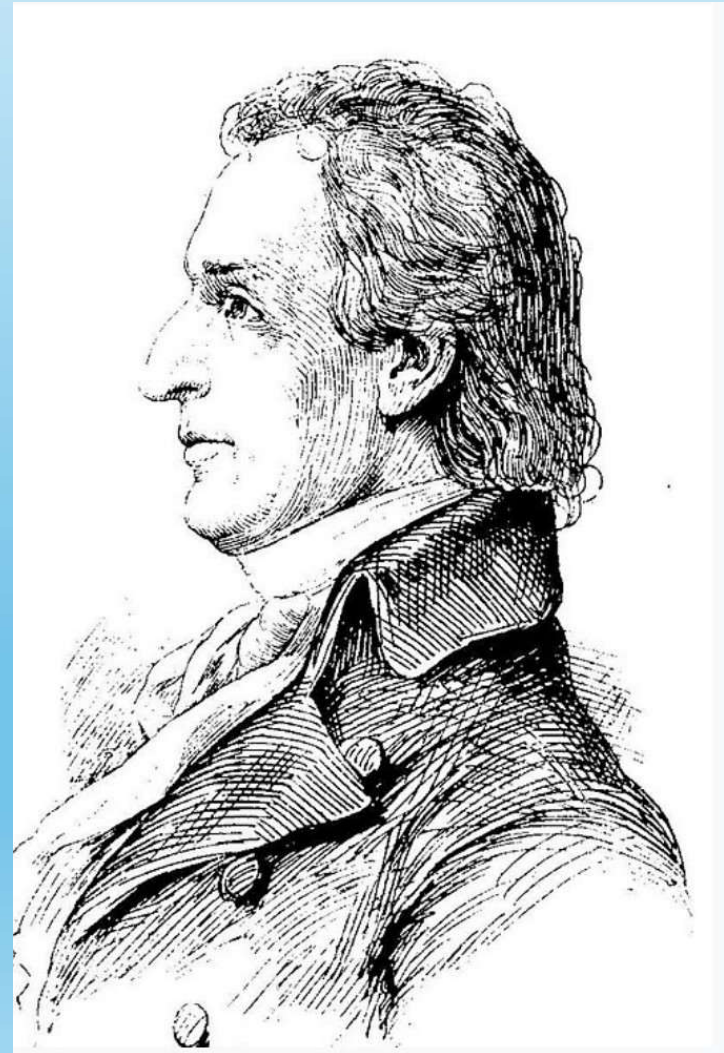
Oliver Cromwell

was named Lord Protector of England,
Scotland & Ireland

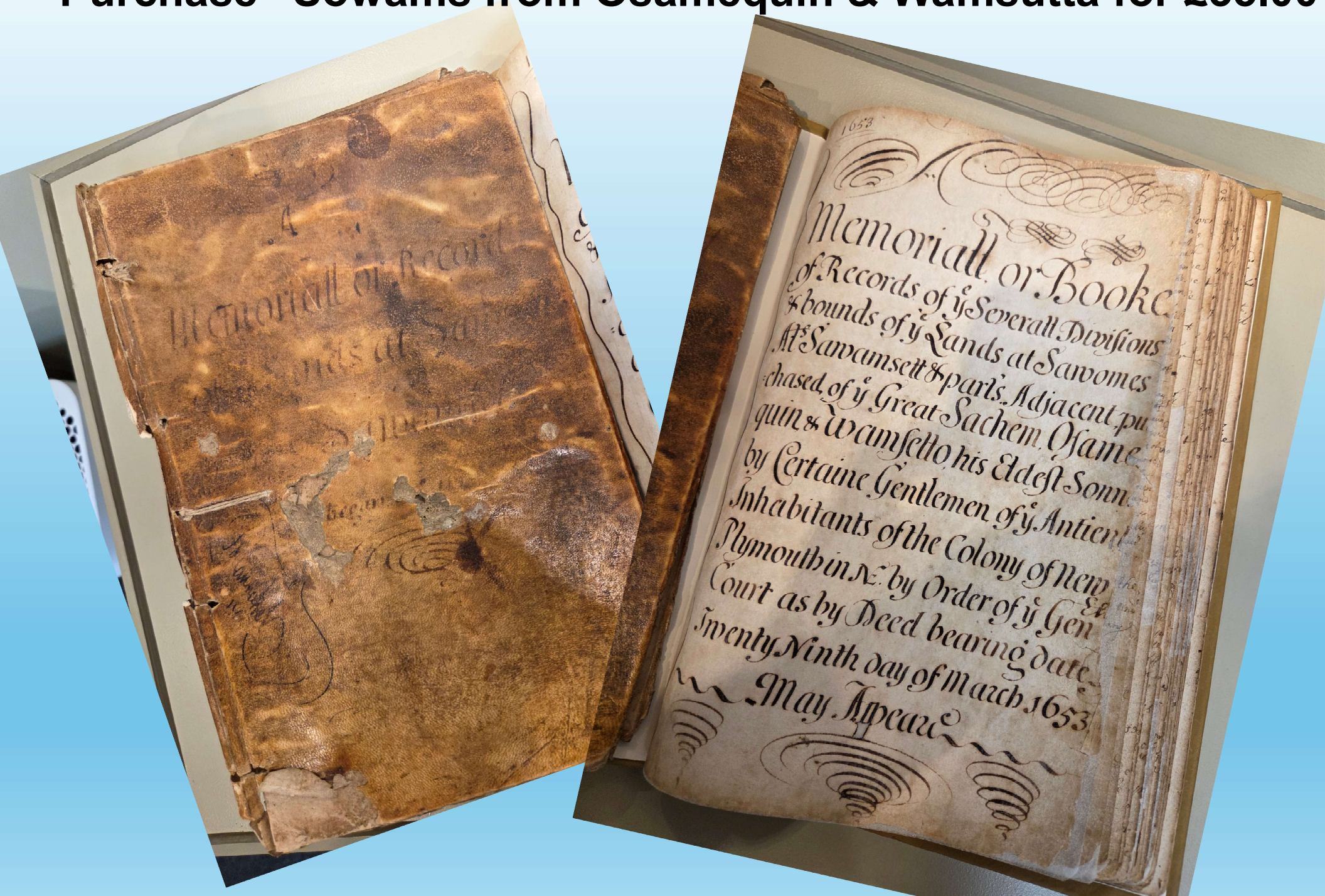


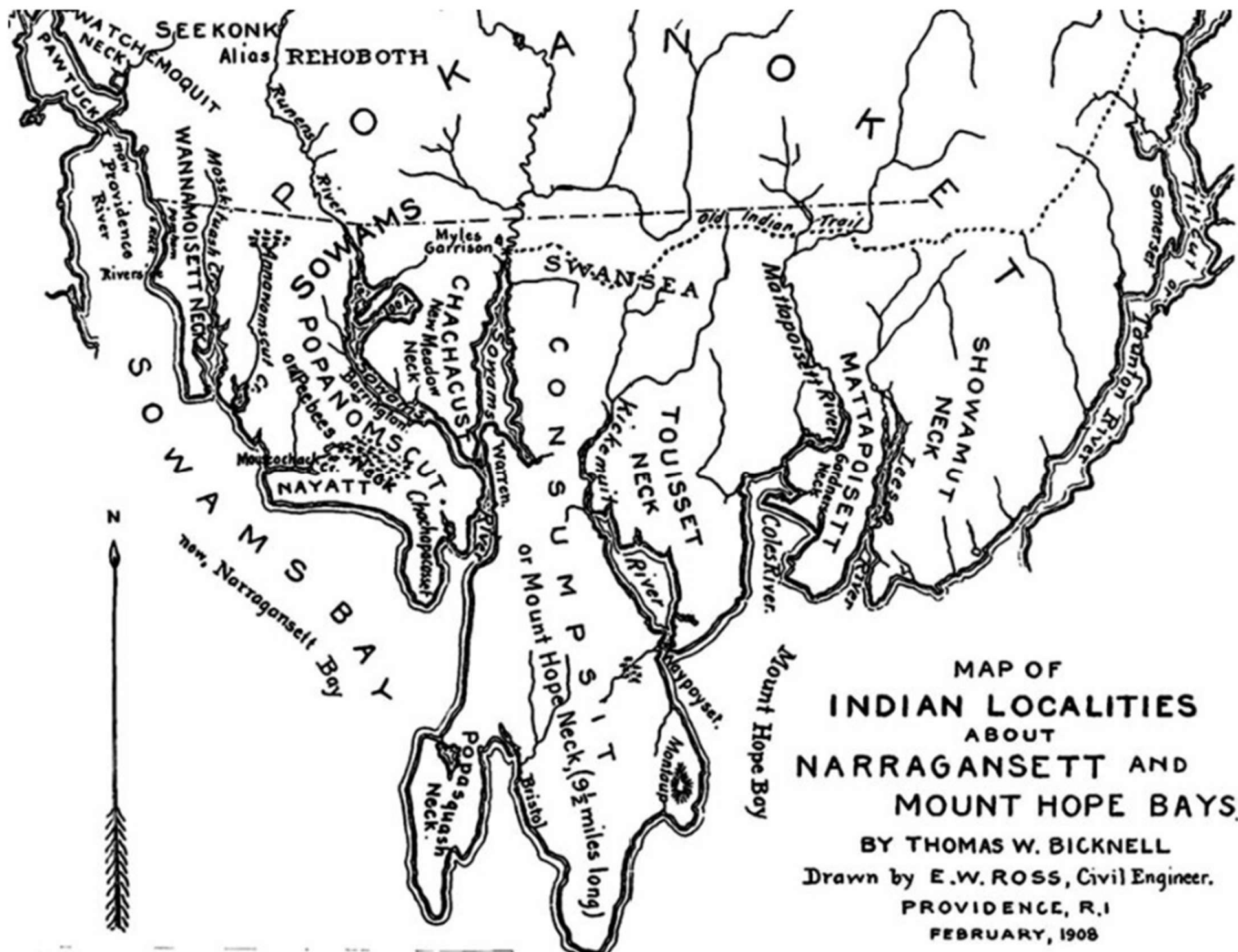
Thomas Willett

“purchases” the Sowams territory from
Ousamequin & Wamsutta



1653 Willett, Prence and Plymouth Colony Proprietors “Purchase” Sowams from Osamequin & Wamsutta for £35.00







BAPTISTS DURING THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR & COMMONWEALTH 1642 TO 1660

'HE THAT PRAYS AND PREACHES BEST WILL FIGHT BEST.' – (OLIVER CROMWELL)

John Myles, 1621 – 1663

Key Events

- **1649:** Following the Beheading of King Charles I, Myles establishes the First Baptist Church in Ilston, a small Village in Swansea, Wales, UK
- **1653:** Oliver Cromwell becomes Lord Protector of England, Wales, Ireland & Scotland. Myles is appointed to Cromwell's "Council of Tryers."
- **1658:** Cromwell Dies
- **1660:** Charles II returns as King and establishes the "Act of Uniformity." Cromwell's body is exhumed, hanged, beheaded, and head is mounted on a pike at Westminster.
- **1663:** Having gotten the message, Myles and a few fellow Baptists flee to Plymouth Colony

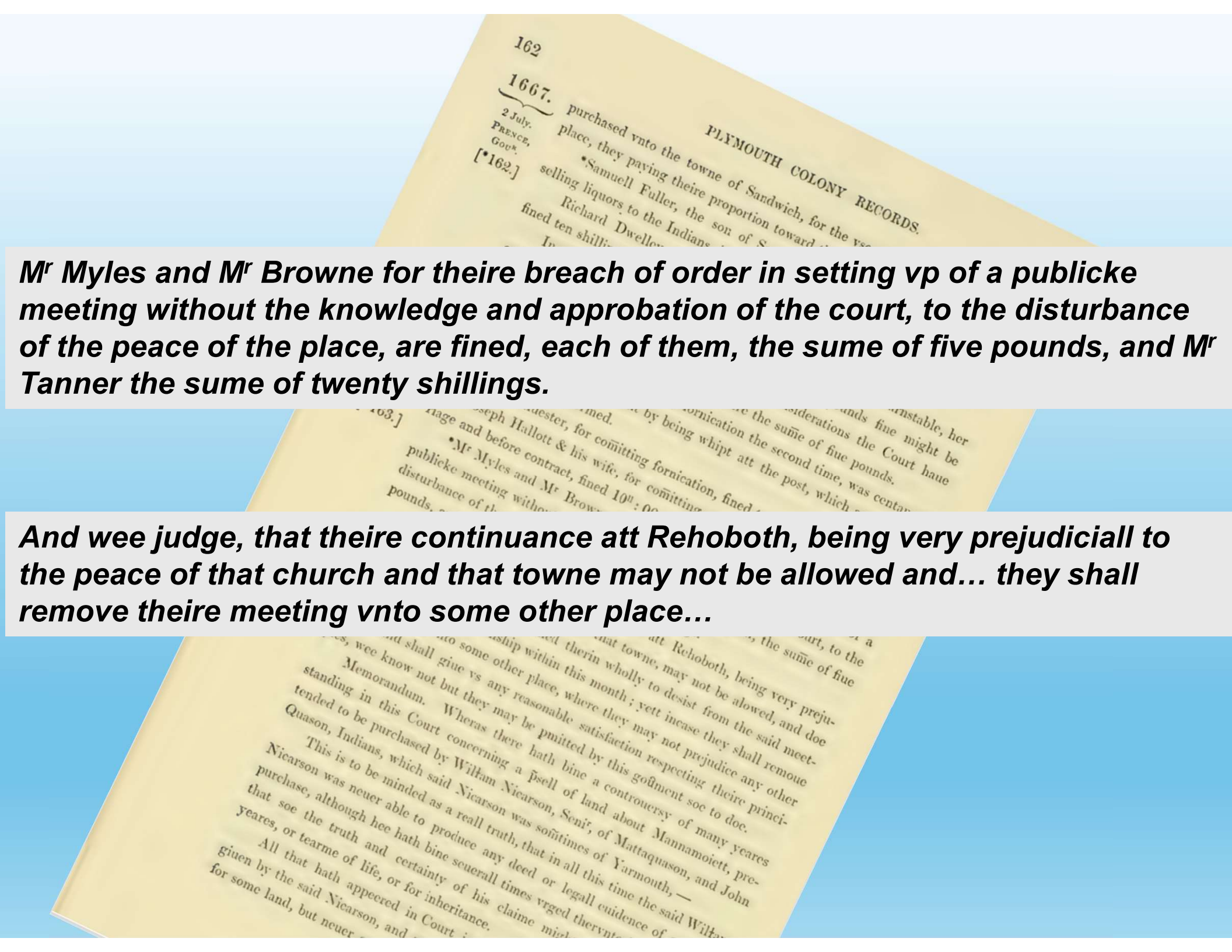


Myles's "Ilson Book"
John Hay Library,
Brown University

Following the beheading of Charles I, Scottish Royalists continued to battle Cromwell's New Model Army. But by 1650, Cromwell crushed the Scottish army at the Battle of Dunbar, killing 4,000 and taking another 10,000 prisoners.

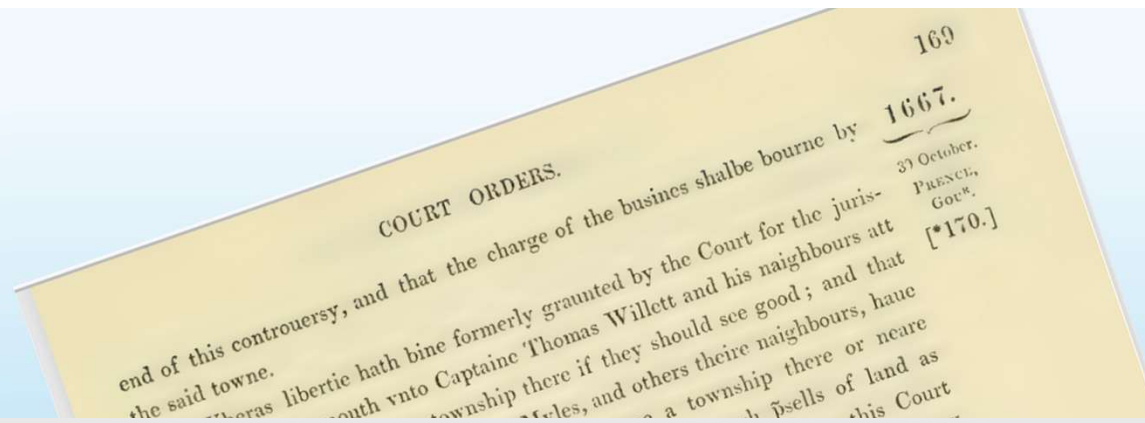


*Among the Scottish Royalist forces taken prisoner and sentenced to serve out his indenture at the Braintree furnace was **William Cahoon**, the 17-year-old Grandson of the 13th Laird of Dunbarton. Cahoon's indenture lasted ~8 years.*



Mr Myles and Mr Browne for their breach of order in setting vp of a publicke meeting without the knowledge and approbation of the court, to the disturbance of the peace of the place, are fined, each of them, the sume of five pounds, and Mr Tanner the sume of twenty shillings.

And wee judge, that their continuance att Rehoboth, being very prejudiciall to the peace of that church and that towne may not be allowed and... they shall remove their meeting vnto some other place...



COURT ORDERS.

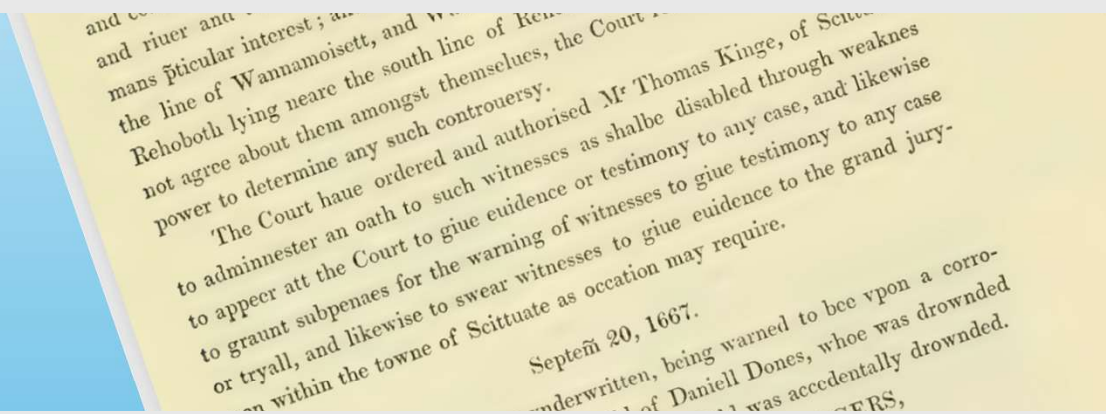
end of this controuersy, and that the charge of the busines shalbe borne by
the said towne. Others libertie hath bine formerly graunted by the Court for the juris-
diction vnto Captaine Thomas Willett and his neighbours att
township there if they should see good; and that
sells of land as
this Court

1667.

30 October.
PRESENTE
GOVT.

[*170.]

Whereas libertie hath bine formerly graunted by the Court for the jurisdiction of N. Plymouth vnto Captaine Thomas Willett... Capt Willett and M^r Myles, and others naighbors, have requested of the Court that they may become a township... the Court have granted vnto them all such lands...

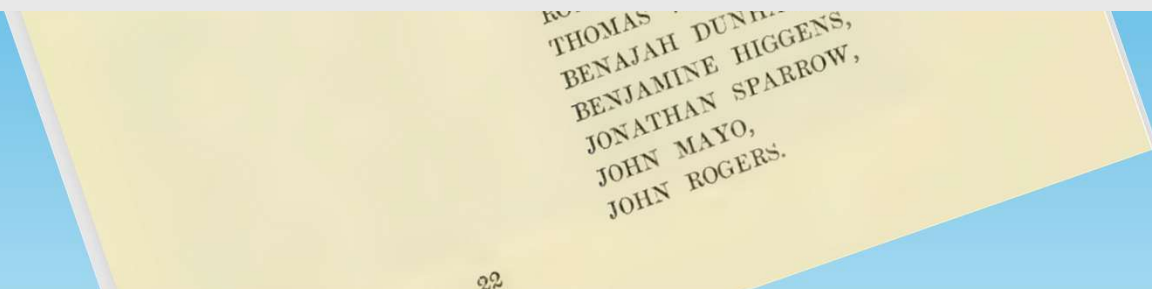


and riuer and
mans pticular interest; and
the line of Wannamoissett, and
Rehoboth lying neare the south line of Rehoboth
not agree about them amongst themselves, the Court
power to determine any such controuersy.
The Court haue ordered and authorised M^r Thomas Kinge, of Scituate
to adminester an oath to such witnesses as shalbe disabled through weaknes
to appeer att the Court to giue evidence or testimony to any case, and likewise
to graunt subpenaes for the warning of witnesses to giue testimony to any case
or tryall, and likewise to swear witnesses to giue evidence to the grand jury-
within the towne of Scituate as occasion may require.

Septem 20, 1667.

underwritten, being warned to bee vpon a corro-
of Daniell Dones, whoe was drowned
was accidentally drowned.

The Court have graunted liberty vnto Captaine Willett to purchase what lands hee can in behalfe of the Court within the township of Swansea soe as hee doe not much straiten the Indians.



THOMAS
BENAJAH DUNN
BENJAMINE HIGGENS
JONATHAN SPARROW
JOHN MAYO
JOHN ROGERS.

March 1667

Willett's Proposal to the Town Council

“Whereas, Capt. Thomas Willett, shortly after the grant of this township, made three following proposals unto those who were with him, by the Court of Plymouth, empowered for the admission of inhabitants, and of granting lots, viz:

“1. That no erroneous person be admitted into the township as an inhabitant or sojourner.

“2. That no man of any evill behaviour or contentious person to be admitted.

“3. That none may be admitted that may become a charge to the place.

Willett's Proposal Ratified By the Church

“Signed in behalf and in the name of the church meeting in Swansea by

“John Myles, Pastor.

“John Butterworth.

55 Inhabitants Agree to the Proposed Rules

22
February
1668/69

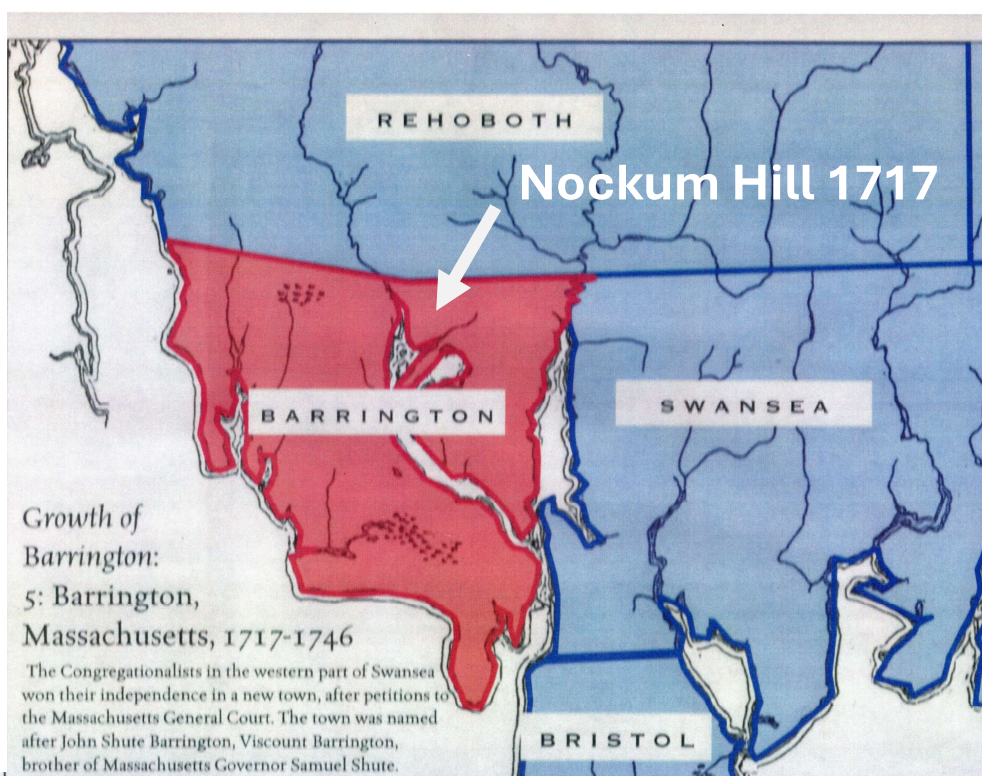
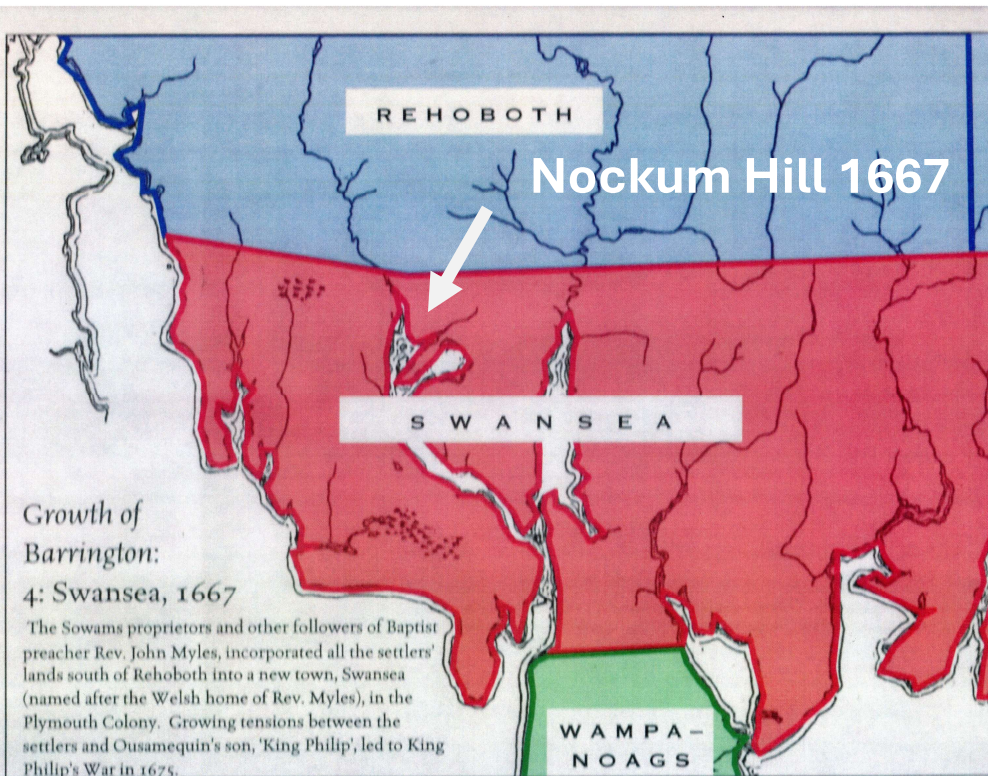
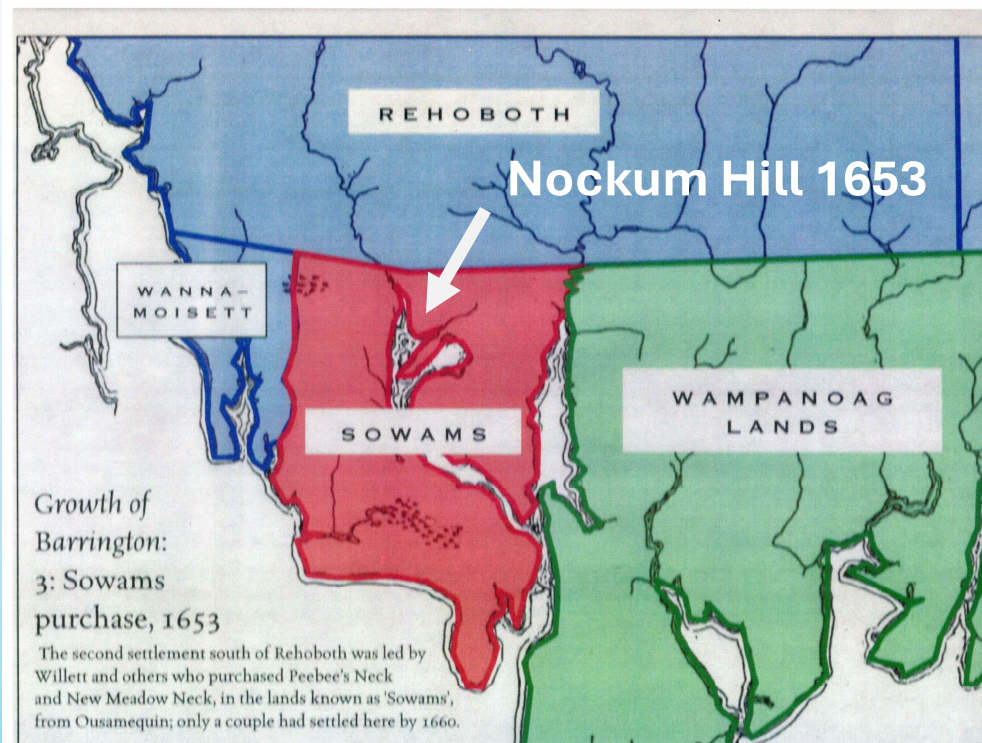
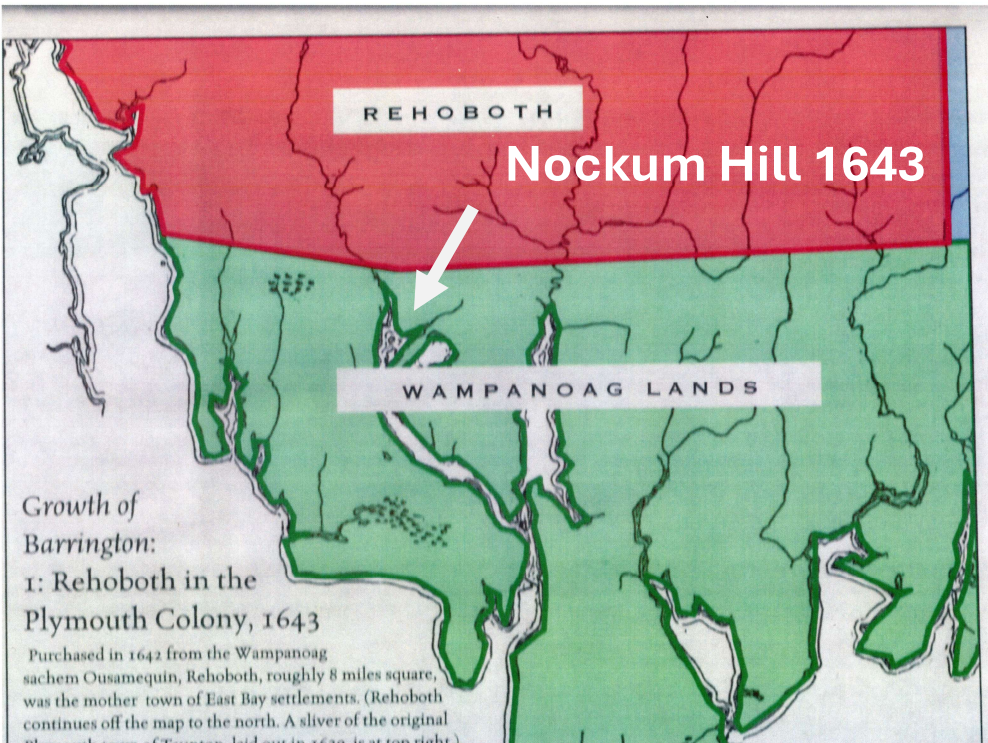
(Signed by fifty-five persons.)

FIRST SIGNERS ADMITTED TO THE TOWN:

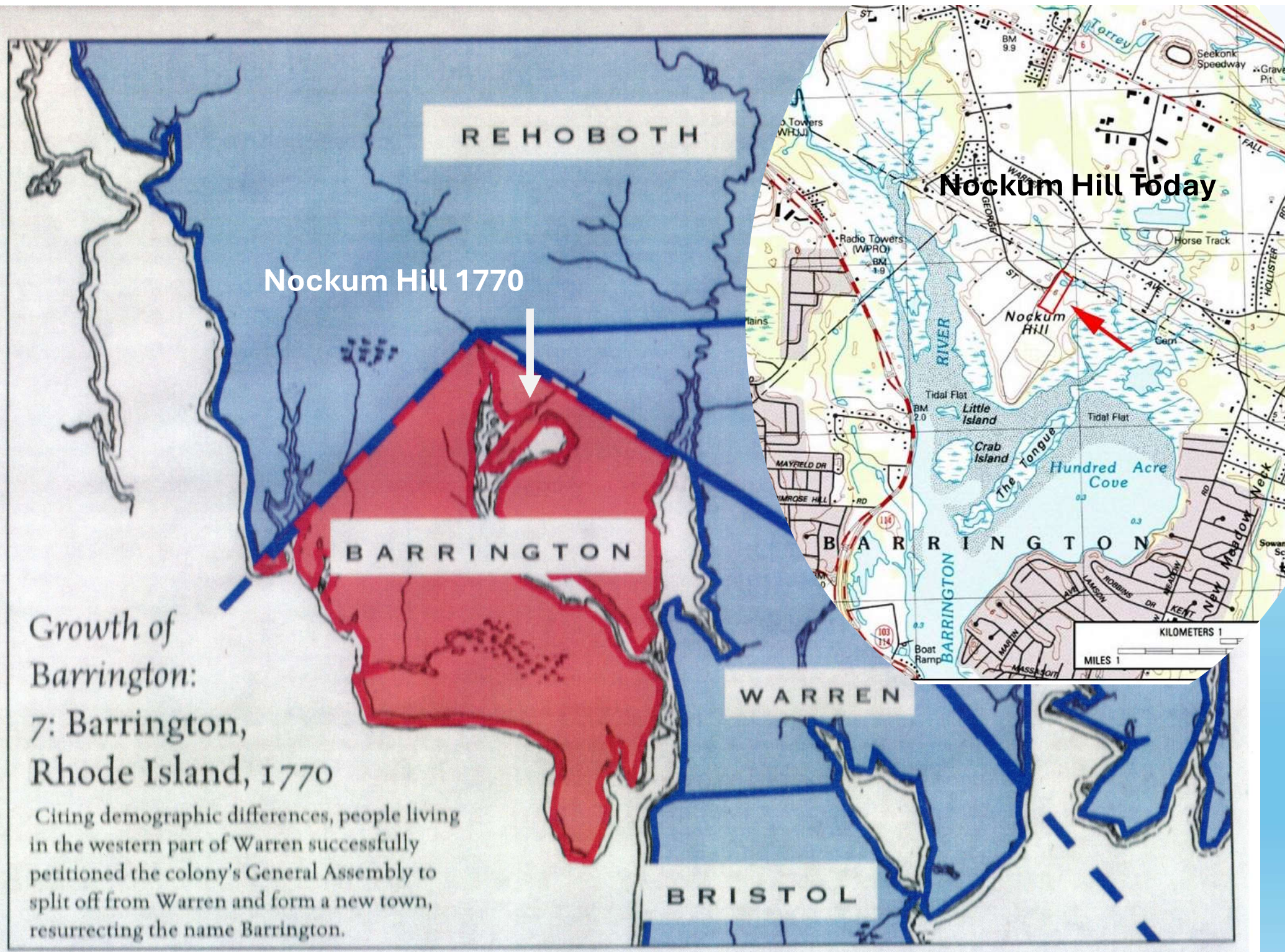
Thomas Willett,
John Myles,
John Allen,
James Brown,
Nicholas Tanner,
Hugh Cole,
Benjamin Alby,
John Browne,
Samuel Wheaton,
Thomas Barnes,
Thos. Estabrooke,
Richard Sharpe,
Wm. Ingraham,
Thos. Manning,
Wm. Cahoone,
George Aldrich,
Nathan'l Lewis,
John Thurber,
Jona Bosworth,
Joseph Lewis,
Wm. Hayward,
Jno. Thurber, 2d
Gerard Ingraham,
Zach. Eddy,
Hezekiah Luther,
John Paddock,
Samuel Luther,

Caleb Eddy,
John Myles, Jr.
Thomas Lewis,
Joseph Carpenter,
Robert Jones,
Eldad Kingsley,
John Martin,
John Cole,
Joseph Wheaton,
Nathan'l Paine,
Stephen Brace,
Gideon Allen,
John Dickse,
Wm. Bartram,
Joseph Kent,
Sam'l Woodbury,
Nehemiah Allen,
Sampson Mason,
Job Winslow,
Obadiah Bowen, Jr.
Richard Burgess,
Jno. Butterworth,
John West,
Thos. Elliott,
Timothy Brooks,
Nathan'l Toogood,
Jere. Child,

Obadiah Brown, Senr."



King Philip's War 1675-1676



Nockum Hill 1770

Nockum Hill Today

Growth of
Barrington:

7: Barrington,
Rhode Island, 1770

Citing demographic differences, people living in the western part of Warren successfully petitioned the colony's General Assembly to split off from Warren and form a new town, resurrecting the name Barrington.



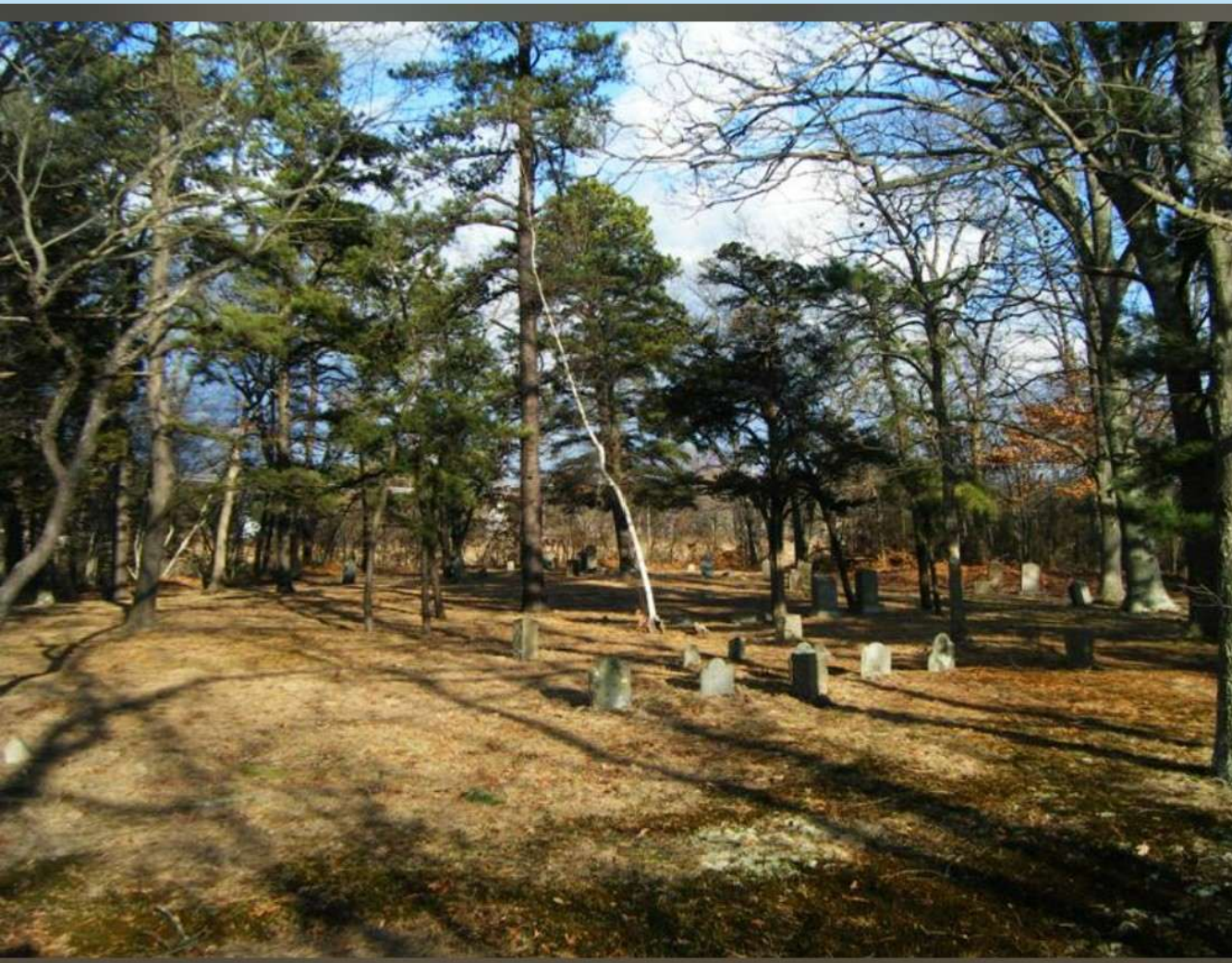
Benjamin Alby Warden at Nockum Hill

“At a Town meeting
Lawfully warned **ye 19th
day of May 1670.**
...**Benjamin Alby (is
chosen) way warden** for
the ensuing year.”

“At a Town meeting
Lawfully warned **ye 18th
day of November 1670.**
It is agreed upon That **a
pound be made three
Rod square near the
meeting house &
Benjamin Alby** is to do it
for forty shilling... before
ye first day of may
next...”

Burial Hill aka Nockum Hill Cemetery

“At a Town meeting lawfully warned **December ye 22nd 1670**. It is agreed upon by ye Town yt **a plot of ground lying and being by ye hundred acres** bounded on ye southwest on ye meadow on ye north by Run of water...on ye South East by a pine swamp with a little neck of land to ye East **shall be a burying place.**”



Amongst Hannah Howland & Jonathan Bos(z)worth's 9 children, Brothers John & Jabez were born at Nockum Hill and buried in the Nockum Hill Cemetery

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John Bosworth's Gravestone (from Bosworth Genealogy)

Photo added by [ShellNak](#)

John Bosworth

BIRTH 6 Apr 1671
Swansea, Bristol County, Massachusetts, USA

DEATH 20 Sep 1719 (aged 48)
Barrington, Bristol County, Rhode Island, USA

BURIAL [Knockum Hill Cemetery](#)
Barrington, Bristol County, Rhode Island, USA [Add to Map](#)

MEMORIAL ID 26739475 · [View Source](#)

SHARE [+ SAVE TO](#) SUGGEST EDITS ▼

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Photo added by [Debi C](#)

Capt Jabez Bozworth

BIRTH 14 Feb 1673
Swansea, Bristol County, Massachusetts, USA

DEATH 21 Sep 1747 (aged 74)
Swansea, Bristol County, Massachusetts, USA

BURIAL [Knockum Hill Cemetery](#)
Barrington, Bristol County, Rhode Island, USA [Add to Map](#)

MEMORIAL ID 26739474 · [View Source](#)

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***Other Original Members of the Town Buried at Nockum Hill Cemetery
Include Renew Weeks & Joseph Carpenter***

Discarded Bricks From The Brickworks at Nearby Johanis Farm

William Cahoon,
Brickmaker at Nockum Hill

December 24, 1673, it was voted that “in Consideration of a Lot and other Accommodations Granted and Given by and from the Town...*William Cahoon Shall Supply all the Inhabitants of the Town with Bricks* at a Price not Exceeding Twenty Shillings...”

*All a Town Meeting Lawfully convened on the
19 Sept. 1673
Joseph Kent is Admitted to be an Inhabitant and to have
a Lot of Twelve Acres.*

*All a Town Meeting of the Town of Nockum Decemb: 24: 1673
It was Agreed upon by and between the Assesment for the benefit
of the Town and William Cahoon Brickmaker that for
and in Consideration of a Lot and other Accommodations
Granted and Given by and from the Town that hee should
William Cahoon It was therefore Agreed and Concluded
upon by the parties Aboves that the said William Cahoon
shall Supply all the Inhabitants of the Town with
Bricks at a Price not Exceeding Twenty Shilling a
Thousand In Current Day Passing between Man and Man*

**A RELACION OF THE INDYAN WARRE, BY
MR. EASTON, OF ROADE ISLD., 1675**

...when the English first came, their king's father (Osemequin) was a great man, and the English as a little Child, he constrained other Indians from wronging them, and gave them corn and showed them how to plant

...and let them have 100 times more land than the king (Philip/Metacom) had for his own people

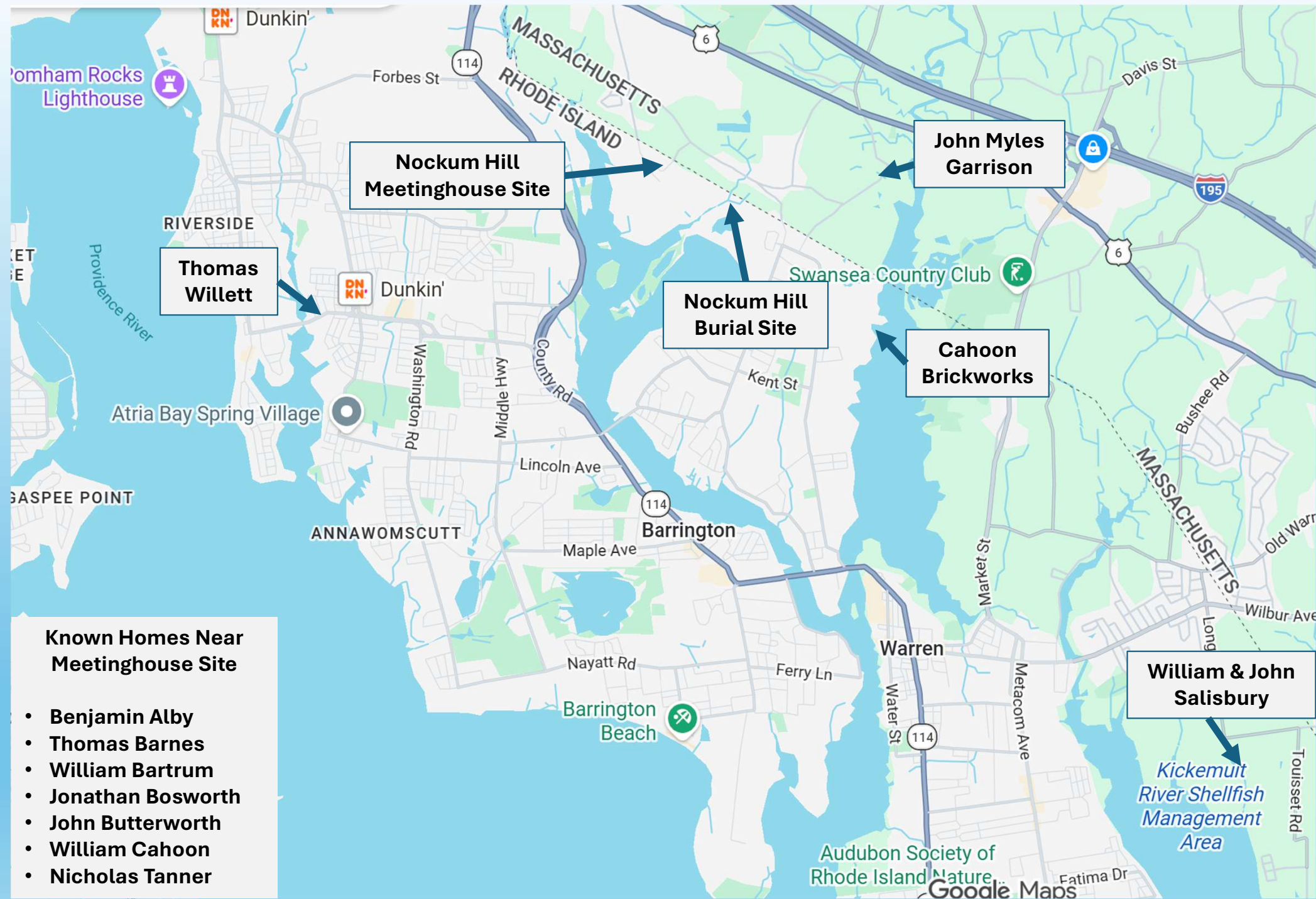
...but their king's brother (Alexander/Wamsutta), when he was king, came miserably to die by being forced to Court as they judged poisoned

...when their kings sold land, the English would say that it was more than agreed to, and a writing must be proof

...and some (Indians) being given to drunkenness, the English made them drunk, then cheated them in bargains

...another grievance, the English cattle and horses still increased, so that when they removed 30 miles from where the English had anything to do, they could not keep their corn from being spoiled

...they thought that when the English bought the land from them, they would have kept their cattle upon their own land.



Known Homes Near Meetinghouse Site

- Benjamin Alby
- Thomas Barnes
- William Bartrum
- Jonathan Bosworth
- John Butterworth
- William Cahoon
- Nicholas Tanner

A
B R I E F H I S T O R Y
O F T H E

W A R R

With the *INDIANS* in
N E V V - E N G L A N D .

(From *June 24, 1675*. when the first English-man was murdered by the Indians, to *August 12, 1676*. when *Philip*, alias *Metacomet*, the principal Author and Beginner of the Warr, was slain.)

Wherein the Grounds, Beginning, and Progress of the Warr, is summarily expressed.

TOGETHER WITH A SERIOUS
E X H O R T A T I O N

to the Inhabitants of that I and,

By *INCREASE MATHER*, Teacher of a Church of Christ, in *Boston* in *New-England*.

Levit. 26. 25. *I will bring a Sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of the Covenant.*

Psal. 107. 43. *Who so is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the Loving-kindness of the Lord.*

Jer. 22. 15. *Did not thy Father doe Judgment and Justice, and it was well with him?*

Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures,
Quam quæ sunt oculis commissa fidelibus;
Legæ Historiam ne fias Historia. *Horat.*

B O S T O N , Printed and Sold by *John Foster* over
against the Sign of the Dove. 1 6 7 6 .

June 24th, 1675

“as soon as ever the people of Swanzy were come from the place where they had been praying together, the Indians discharged a volley of shot whereby they killed one man & wounded others.”

“...there were nine English men murdered that day.”

“Thus did the War Begin...”

A
NARRATIVE OF THE
INDIAN WARS
IN NEW-ENGLAND,

From the first Planting thereof in the Year
1607, to the Year 1677.

CONTAINING
Relation of the Occasion, Rise and Progress of
the WAR with the INDIANS, in the Southern,
Western, Eastern and Northern Parts of
said Country.

By WILLIAM HUBBARD, A. M. of Ipswich.



NORWICH—Printed by JOHN TRUMBULL.

A
NARRATIVE
Of the Causes which led to
PHILIP'S INDIAN WAR,
of 1675 and 1676,

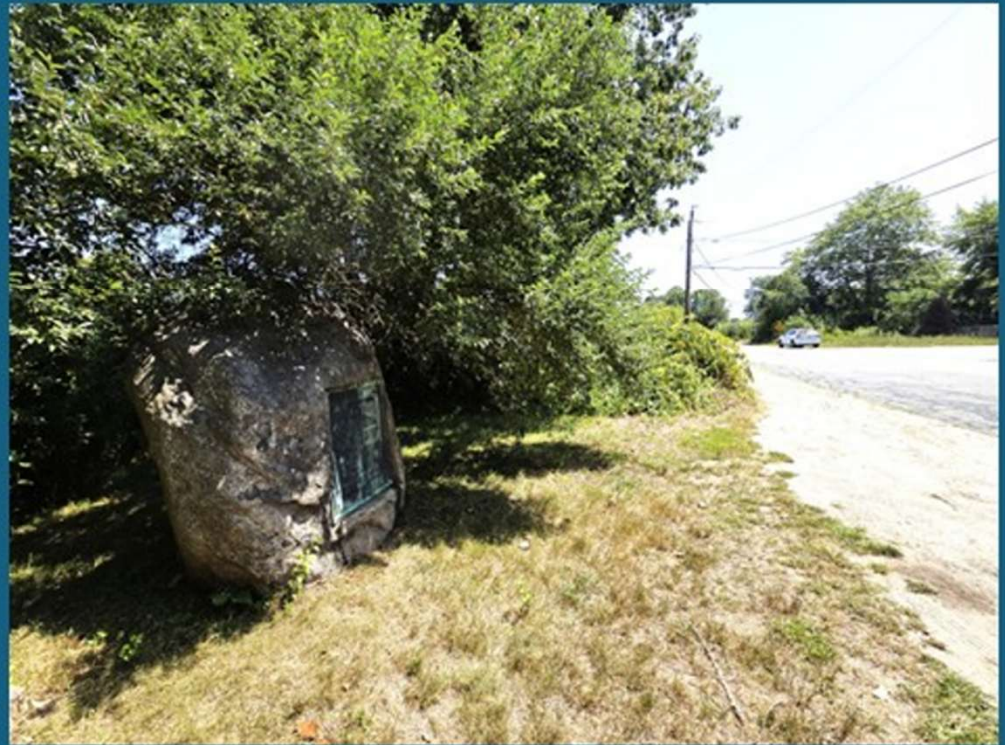
By JOHN EASTON, of Rhode Island,
1647-1705
With other Documents concerning this
Event in the Office of the Secretary of
State of New York.
Prepared from the Originals, with an
Introduction and Notes.

By FRANKLIN B. HOUGH.

ALBANY, N. Y.
J. MUNSELL, 78 STATE STREET.
M D CCC LVIII.

Monument to Myles' Garrison Site, Barneyville, MA

Erected 1912



Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Members and Project Partners Assist with Artifact Recovery



Evidence of a *Palisade Wall* and *Defensive Trench* Suggest a Fortified Structure Probable Meetinghouse Location

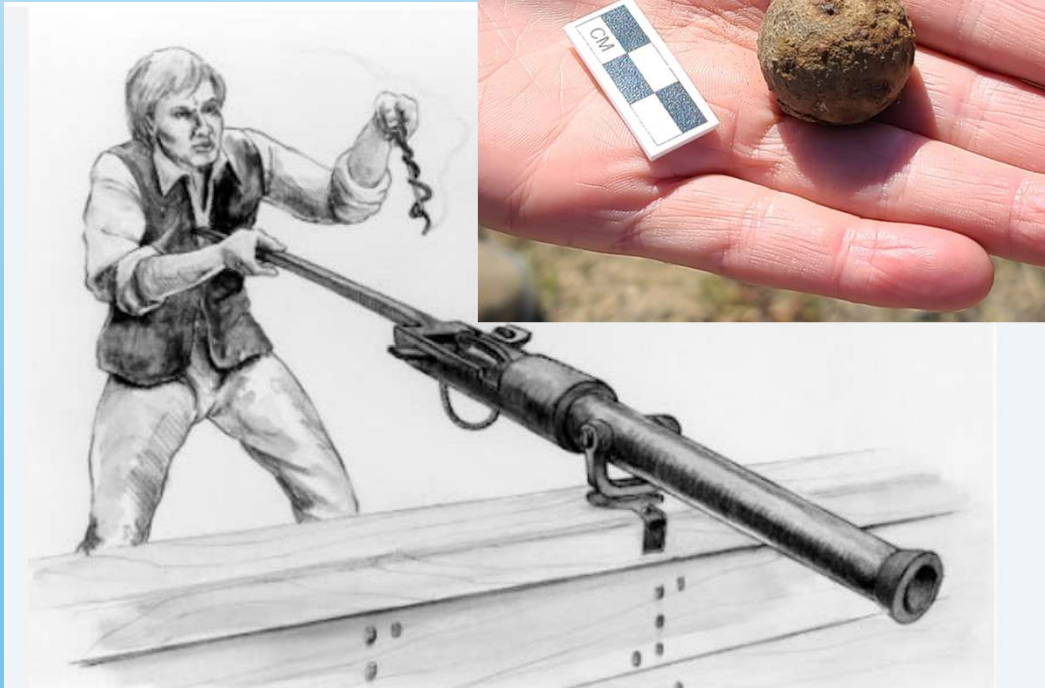


Image 13: Photograph of Feature 1, possible palisade wall, and associated Feature 2 after excavation in the negative, view south.

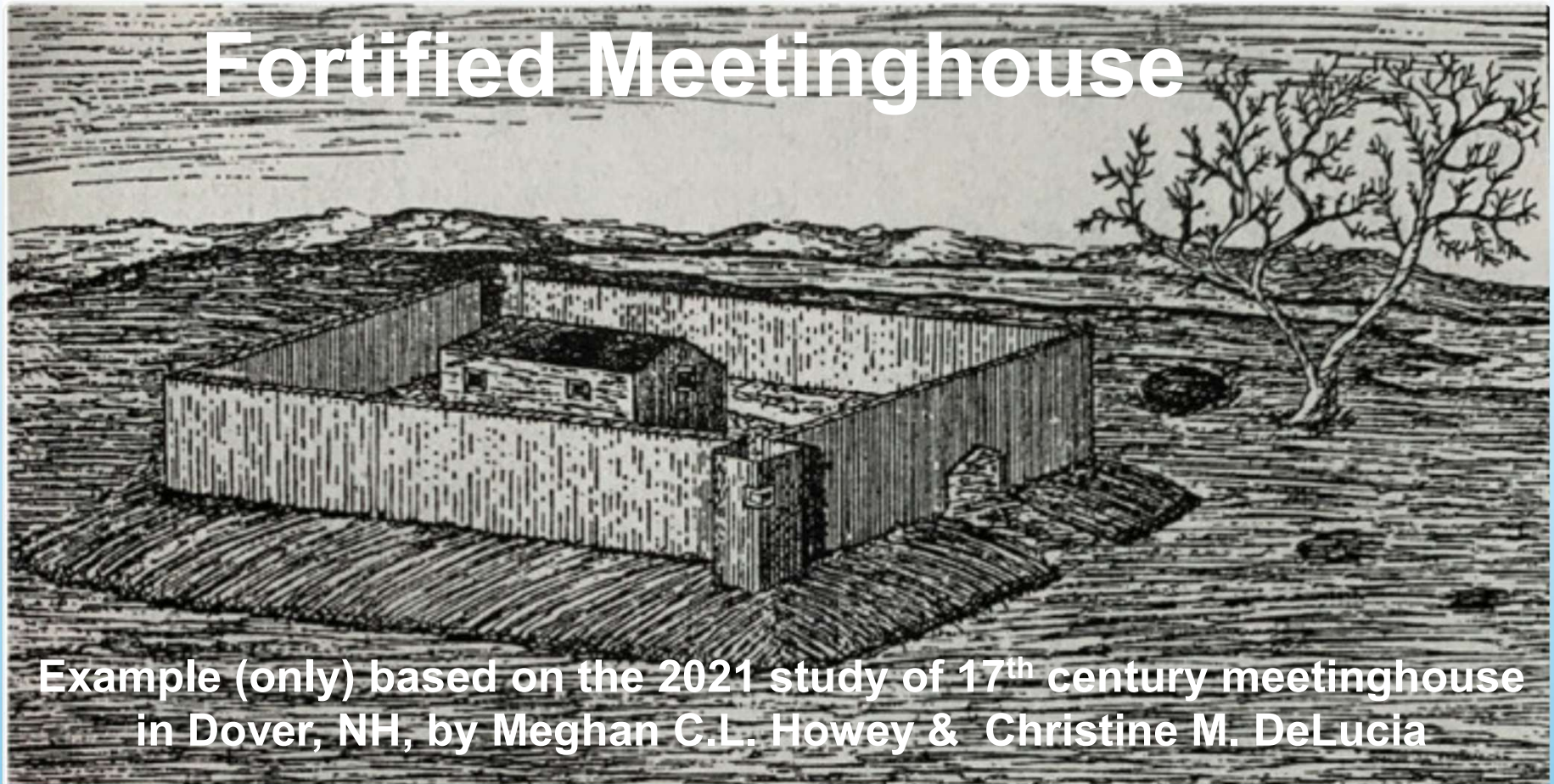


Image 15: Photograph of the Feature 3 trench after excavation in the negative, view south.

Found near the Meetinghouse site was evidence of a palisade wall, and 3 small steel “swivel gun” cannon balls



Fortified Meetinghouse



Example (only) based on the 2021 study of 17th century meetinghouse in Dover, NH, by Meghan C.L. Howey & Christine M. DeLucia

“The summit appears to be the meetinghouse location, which was evidently fortified and armed.”

“A long, deep trench on one side of the hill and a possible palisade wall on the opposite side were identified...”

Also identified were “...24 lead musket balls/ shot on the lot, plus three iron cannonballs near the rise that is Nockum Hill...” along with “Hand-wrought nails, buttons and a brass key on the summit...”



Image 22: A sherd of Westerwald Blue and Gray (1600-1775) salt-glazed stoneware recovered from the Feature 5 house midden area.



Image 23: A fragment of a redware tobacco pipe bowl and an iron clothing hook, prior to conservation, from the Feature 5 midden.

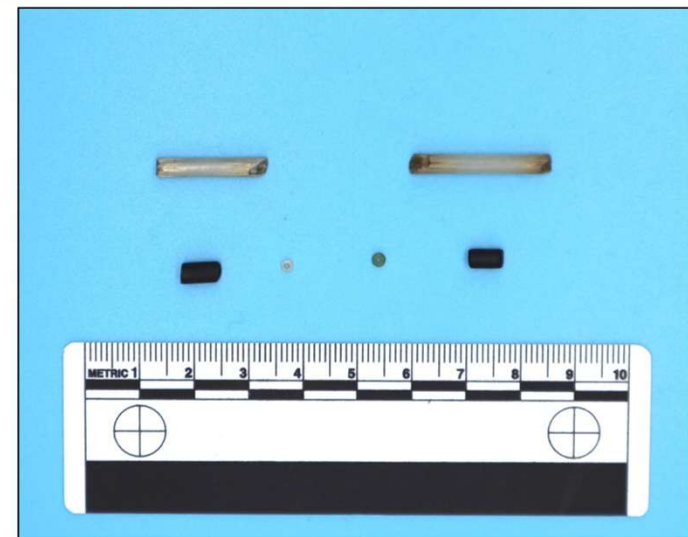


Image 24: Glass trade beads recovered from the Feature 5 midden.

Metal Spear Head



Arrow Head



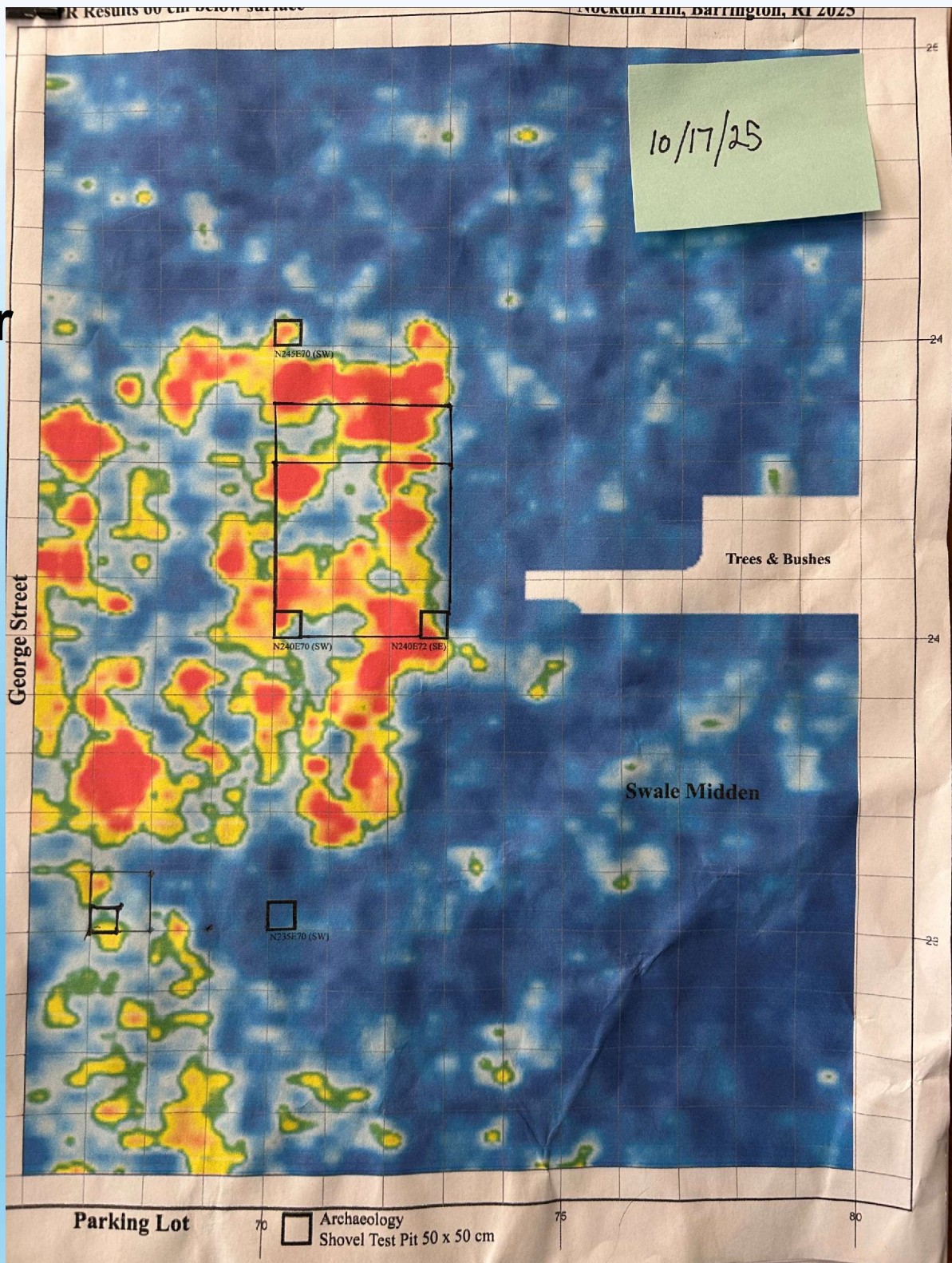
Metal “Flaming” Arrow Head



Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey of the Meetinghouse Site

**By UMass Boston
Graduate Students**

**Ground Penetrating Radar
(GPR) Shows Clear
Footprint of House Site
Image Guided Excavation**



Each Square Meter is Carefully Mapped, divided into Quarters, and excavated by the Shovel-Full, a Few Centimeters Deep at a Time



Every Shovel-full is Loaded into a 5-Gallon Bucket and Sifted for Artifacts.



Fully Intact Clay Pipe



**Clay Pipe Pieces With
Maker's Markings**



A close-up photograph of a person's hand wearing a black nitrile glove with orange stitching. The hand is holding a seal-top spoon, which has a rounded, textured head and a long, thin handle. The spoon is covered in a fine layer of sand or sediment. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

Fully Intact Seal-Top Spoon

A photograph of a small, dark, irregularly shaped fragment of a seal-top spoon. The fragment is being held between the fingers of a person's hand, which is visible in the background. The fragment appears to be made of a dark, possibly metal or bone, material.

**Seal-Top Spoon
Fragment**

A photograph of a carved bone handle, likely for a knife. The handle is made of a light-colored bone and features a series of deep, parallel ridges or grooves running along its length. It is resting on a flat, light-colored surface.

Carved Bone (knife?) Handle

A photograph of a long, dark, and heavily corroded metal knife blade. The blade is resting on a white, crinkled plastic surface. The corrosion is extensive, giving the blade a rough, pitted appearance.

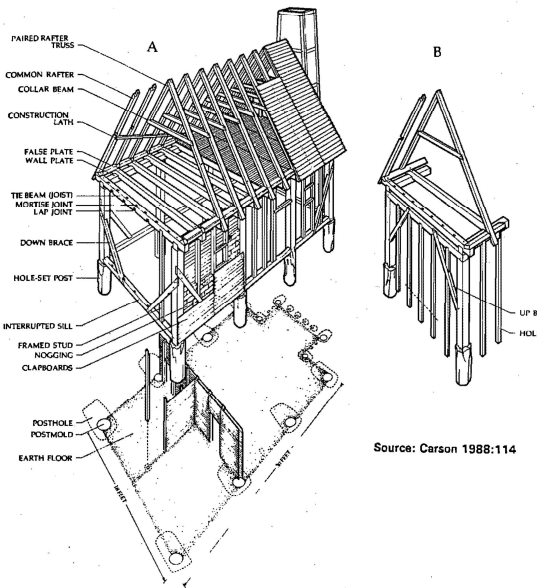
Long Metal Knife Blade

**Collecting Aerial
Drone Images**



Drone Image Showing Excavated House Site with Burned Timbers Exposed and Center Fireplace Base Clearly Visible

Similar Construction
Example Only

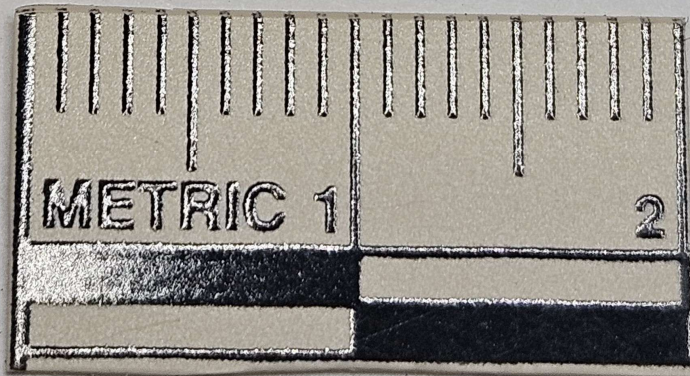


Artifact Screening and Conservation *continues off-site in the laboratory*



Conical Arrowhead

Recovered From the Charred Remains of the House Site



Wooden Shaft

*Extracted from the Arrowhead
During Conservation*

Conserved Artifacts

From House & Midden Site

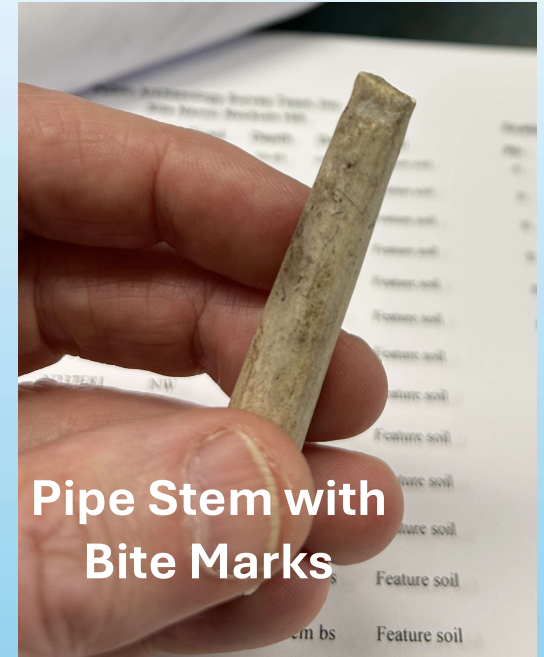
**Bone Comb
Fragment**



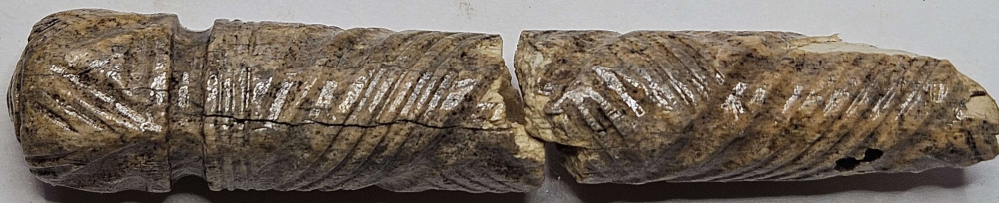
**German Glazed
Stoneware**



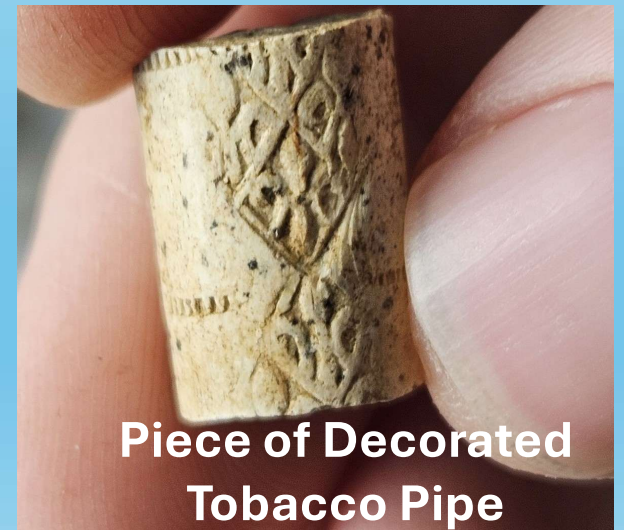
**Pipe Stem with
Bite Marks**



**Carved Bone Handle
Two Pieces Found Separately**



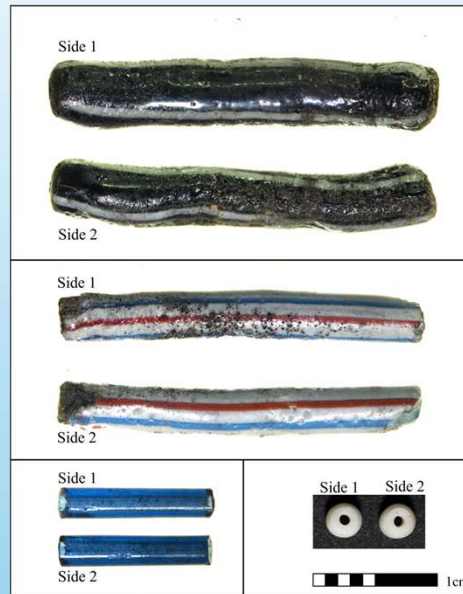
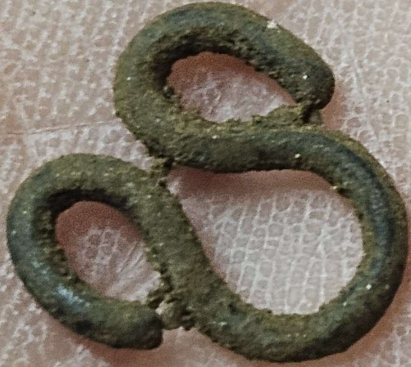
**Piece of Decorated
Tobacco Pipe**



More Conserved Artifacts

From House & Midden Site

Clothing Hook



Trade Beads

Stamp Spoon



Tiny Bead



Iron Belt Buckle



Public Archaeology Survey Team (PAST) Field Crew



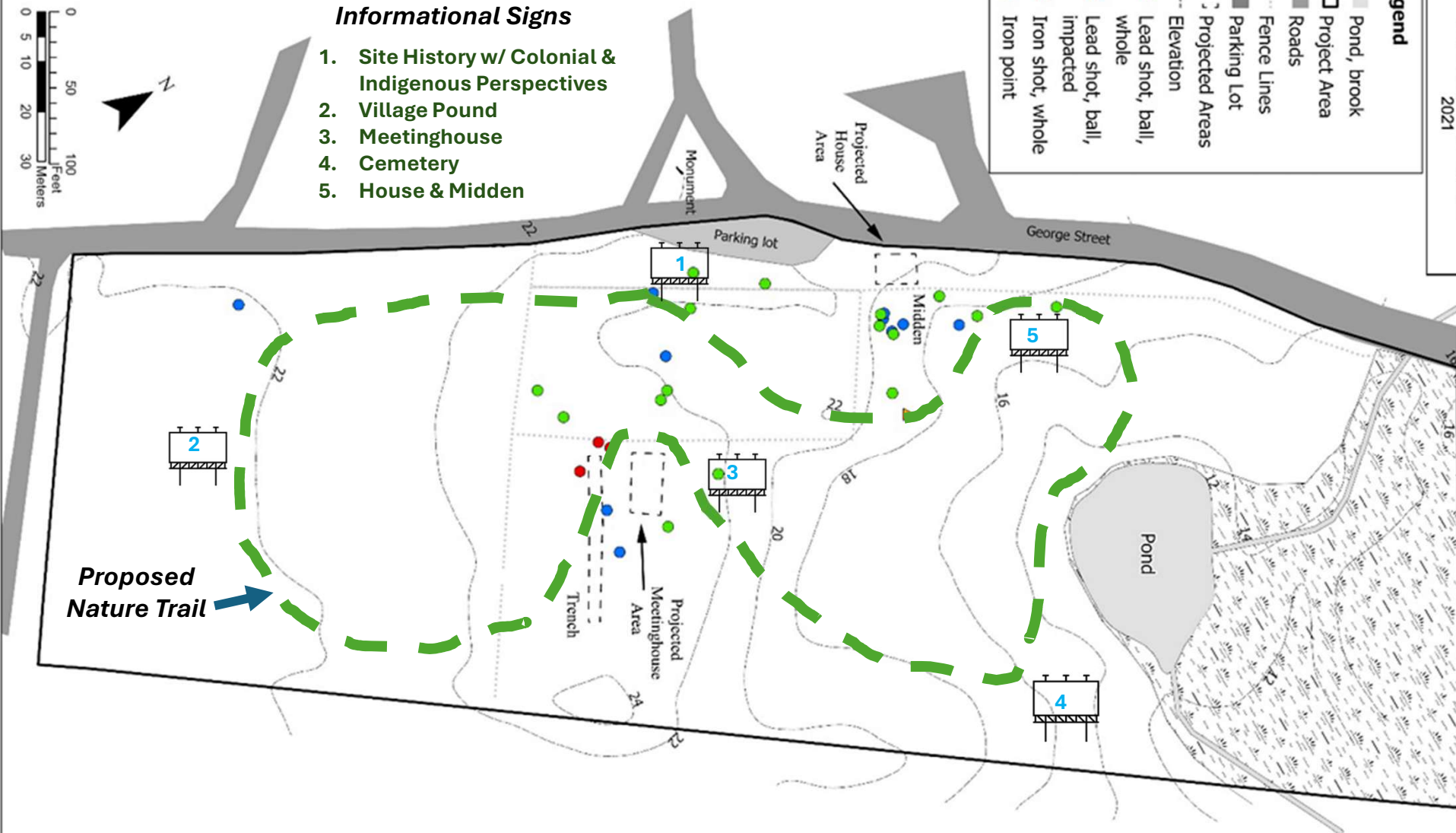
***MUCH
MORE
TO DO***

Legend

-  Pond, brook
-  Project Area
-  Roads
-  Fence Lines
-  Parking Lot
-  Projected Areas
-  Elevation
-  Lead shot, ball, whole
-  Lead shot, ball, impacted
-  Iron shot, whole
-  Iron point

Proposed Informational Signs

1. Site History w/ Colonial & Indigenous Perspectives
2. Village Pond
3. Meetinghouse
4. Cemetery
5. House & Midden



For More Information or to Volunteer, go to barringtonpreservation.org, click on Barrington History Topics, select Nockum Hill in the dropdown menu



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<https://barringtonpreservation.org/nockum-hill/>

Contact me directly at svenuti52@gmail.com